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HOW MUCH DO STEERS LOSE?

How much weight, on an average, do cattle normally lose when moving to market by rail or truck?

Are some types of cattle affected more than others? What are the best conditions under which your cattle can be moved?

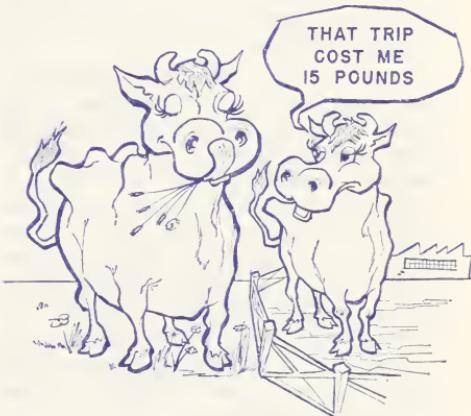
All these questions have grim dollars-and-cents significance to you cattle producers who sell on the basis of the weight of your animals at marketing destination. Obviously, the greater the loss, the lighter your purse on this type of transaction.

Answers can be given if you keep in mind that figures involved can only be averages. They cannot be precisely calculated to the last decimal point, by any means.

From the study some facts stand out clearly.

The first is that time in transit is the most important single influence affecting the weight of your cattle between the time they are weighed on-car at the shipping point and the time they are weighed off-car at destination.

Almost three-fourths of the variation in shrinkage rates can be ac-



counted for by the time factor alone, under conditions where transit time varies and most of the other important variables are known.

The shrinkage rates are gross rates, computed from on-car and off-car weights with no fillback period at destination involved.

Shrinkage rates at the beginning of the shipment are usually very heavy. They average about 4 percent after 2 hours in transit. This is true of both stocker-feeders and fat animals.

In the first 8 to 10 hours of shipment, fat animals shrink slightly more than stocker-feeders. This loss is almost entirely loss of belly fill (excretory shrinkage).

However, as time in transit increases, stocker-feeders lose their advantage over fat animals.

In fact, after the shipments have been in transit long enough for a feed and rest stop to have occurred (28 to 36 hours), fat animals show a shrinkage percentage about 2 percent less than stocker-feeders.

Two Reasons

There are two ways of accounting for this. One probability is that fat animals have a smaller stomach capacity compared with their body weight. Hence the belly shrink is less and doesn't occur over as long a time.

The other is that fat animals, used to confinement in pens, take on a better fill at feed and rest stops than stocker-feeders.

After the first feed and rest stop, the shrinkage rates increase very slowly for both stocker-feeders and fat animals—only a little over 1 percent for each additional day en route.

Compared with the beginning of the shipment, loss of belly fill is very slight. Much of the shrinkage in the latter stages is undoubtedly tissue shrink, actual loss in the weight of the animal's meaty tissues.

The average shrinkage rates quoted above are, of course, subject to some variations in individual cases.

Now, as to the second question:

Heifers shrink more than steers but the difference is very slight.

Brahmas and Brahma crossbreeds shrink at almost the same rates as the English breeds.

Weight and finish of the animals appear to have little bearing on shrinkage rates, either for stocker-feeders or for fat animals.

What about conditions of shipment?

No distinction can be made between shipments made by truck and those made by rail. Data were inadequate for such a comparison. In general, hauls under 24 hours are almost always made by truck; longer hauls, by rail.

The effects of temperature and weather during shipment are difficult to measure. However, shrinkages were heavier in the summer months than during the rest of the year.

Heifers showed slightly greater shrinkage increases during hot weather than steers. Brahma and Brahma crossbreeds experienced about the same shrinkage in the summer as the English breeds.

Now, to challenge a popular assumption: When shipments are made under nearly identical conditions, gross shrinkage rates are very uniform. Wide variations in shrinkage rates between individual shipments that so many producers seem to expect just don't occur, judging by available data.

Spring Shipments

To illustrate, take shrinkage data on spring shipments of steers from feed-lots in the Phoenix, Ariz., area to packers at Los Angeles. On these shipments, distance, time en route, mode of transportation, and preweighing conditions were almost identical.

These data show shrinkage up to 4.4 percent for 6 percent of the cattle; 4.5 to 5.5 percent for 24 percent; 5.5 to 6.5 percent for 42 percent; 6.5 to 7.5 percent for 19 percent; and 7.5 percent and over for only 9 percent. This covers 98 truck loads, averaging about 30 steers per load.

Summarizing these data, steers shipped in the spring had an average gross shrinkage of 6 percent. Eighty-

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five percent of the shipments showed shrinkage losses ranging from 4.5 to 7.5 percent.

Where cattle are placed on hay and water at destination for some time before final weights are taken, a most interesting situation is revealed.

Say that the shipment has been relatively long and that fat animals have lost as much as 10 percent. Give these same cattle up to 48 hours in the yards and the shrinkage will be cut back to 5 percent or a little more.

Net Shrinkage

Increase that fillback period beyond 48 hours and it doesn't seem to make any appreciable further difference. The net shrinkage will remain around 5 percent.

There's no explanation for this, on the basis of present data. It doesn't seem to pay to hold cattle in the yards over a day hoping to increase the number of pounds regained.

A sizable part of the 5 percent net loss in weight is probably tissue shrinkage.

This can't be regained as rapidly as excretory shrinkage.

These points, it's hoped, will be of real practical assistance to you. There remain other factors which are now the subject of research at several Western State agricultural experiment stations. This research is designed to trace still further the relationships between a number of variables and shrinkage rates and to add information on this subject.

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Agricultural Economist, University of
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Farmer's Share of Consumer's Food Dollar

March 1956-----	39 percent
February 1957-----	38 percent
March 1957-----	39 percent

Red Meat Production Sets Record in 1956

Red meat production reached an all-time peak of 28.1 billion pounds in 1956, according to the Crop Reporting Board.

Total 1956 meat production—that's commercial plus farm slaughter—exceeded by 4 percent the previous record of 26.9 billion pounds set in 1955.

Beef production set a new record of 14.5 billion pounds, exceeding the 1955 record by 7 percent.

Veal and pork also exceeded 1955 production figures. Veal production totaled 1.6 billion pounds, up 3 percent; pork, 11.2 billion pounds, up 2 percent.

However, mutton and lamb production, at 741 million pounds, was 2 percent less than in 1955.

Beef accounted for 51 percent of the total meat produced in 1956. Pork made up 40 percent, veal 6 percent, and lamb and mutton, 3 percent. Lard production in 1956 totaled 2.8 billion pounds, compared with 2.7 billion pounds in 1955.

Number of cattle slaughtered in 1956 was 4 percent above 1955. Cattle slaughter under Federal inspection was up 6 percent from 1955. Other commercial slaughter was only slightly higher. Farm slaughter was up 3 percent.

Calf slaughter in 1956 was up 1 percent. Slaughter of calves under Federal inspection was up 5 percent, other commercial slaughter down 4 percent, and farm slaughter down less than 1 percent.

Total number of sheep and lambs slaughtered in 1956 was 1 percent less than in 1955. The number slaughtered under Federal inspection declined 1 percent from 1955. Other commercial slaughter was off 4 percent, and farm slaughter was down 1 percent.

Total hog slaughter in 1956 was 5 percent greater than in 1955. Slaughter in Federally inspected plants was up 7 percent, in other commercial plants down 1 percent, and farm slaughter down 2 percent.

GROWERS LEARN OF SUPPLY FROM USDA CROP REPORTS

In these days of numerous Government services a question frequently heard is: "What use are Government crop reports to the farmers?"

To economists and marketing specialists who work constantly with agricultural marketing and price problems the answer is fairly obvious.

These technicians usually think in terms of the general agricultural welfare. Consequently, they probably would answer that Government crop reports are of great use to agricultural producers, furnishing them unbiased knowledge of the supply picture at any given moment. With this information the farmer is in a much more advantageous position to sell his products.

Reports Unbiased

These same economists and marketing specialists probably would also point out that Government crop reports—being unbiased—are essential to the efficient operation of groups allied to agriculture.

These groups include financing agencies, transportation agencies, buyers, and distributors at both the wholesale and retail levels. If all these are helped to do an orderly and effective job of marketing, the farmer is bound to benefit.

The research worker and the legislator would have other reasons why Government crop reports help the farmer. They probably would add that the Government reports contain basic information on acreage, production, and prices.

With this information it is easier to legislate on farm problems so that the whole community including the farmer obtains maximum benefit.

Does the individual farmer get specific benefits from Government crop reports?

Naturally, but it's more difficult to demonstrate. This is particularly true

if the farmer is selling on a low market and is having a difficult time "keeping out of the red." But intelligent use of crop reports will help even farmers in this plight to minimize or avoid losses in a season of large supplies.

Potato crop reports will illustrate this point. In March 1956, storage supplies were cleaning up well. Aided by a small winter production and a prospective small spring crop, prices were high.

Apparently influenced by these good prices, growers in the 29 late States reported in March their intentions to plant more acres to potatoes in 1956 than had been suggested by the acreage guides. These were issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in January 1956.

These intentions were reported by the USDA on March 16. Now the grower had all the facts before him and could use them to determine his course. As it turned out, he could have decreased his production risks by *not* "following the herd" so to speak.

Higher Yield Indicated

Beginning in August 1956 and continuing into November 1956 the Government potato reports showed production prospects on the increased acreage. The season was unusually good and the reports showed prospects of a record yield per acre.

Diggings at harvest time confirmed the earlier prospects. The December 1956 crop report carried a production estimate which differed from the October report (on the eve of harvest) by only 0.4 percent.

Just as the Government reports had indicated all along, the crop was large and it was evident from the beginning that extraordinary efforts would have to be made to move it to market in an orderly and effective manner. The grower had had all this information in his possession from the start and he

could use it to determine what his 1956 potato plans would be.

Though marketing agreements in a number of States eliminated many potatoes of inferior grades and a Government diversion program was helpful, Government crop reports continued to show large storage supplies in the hands of growers and local dealers on December 1, 1956, and January 1, February 1, and March 1, 1957. This was true despite larger monthly disposals of potatoes than in the previous year.

As expected, prices received by growers were lower than during the previous season. It was a poor season, financially, for many growers. But this did not mean that the Government reports on production and stocks were not useful to growers. On the contrary, these reports were available to guide the grower on the time and rate of marketing of his potatoes when these elements of timing and rate of disposal were important.

Short Supplies

These same Government crop reports are also available when supplies of any commodity are short. Then growers can take advantage of the situation in a more positive manner.

Usually small potato crops bring growers more money than large crops. Since Government crop reports give timely information on short crops as well as large crops, it is obviously to the advantage of the grower for everyone in the "trade" to know when crop prospects are light.

If it were not for the Government crop reports, when the farmer met the buyer in the market place, both would be almost entirely in the dark about total supply.

The buyer would probably be over-cautious, hold prices as low as possible. The farmer, on the other hand, would be hard pressed to defend himself.

Intelligent bargaining just isn't possible when either party is bargaining in ignorance. Government crop reports chase away ignorance.

Oakley M. Frost
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS

How White Should Your Cotton Be?

What color is cotton while it is still in the fields?

That question will be a natural for any cotton grower who ever finds himself on a television quiz program. Most people would answer "Snowy white." But you growers would know that the correct answer is: "A variety of colors—ranging from white to dark and dingy."

Of course, if the question were changed to: "What is the best color for cotton still in the fields?" then your answer naturally would be: "The lighter and brighter the color, the better the cotton."

If the quizmaster wants more information, you could tell him that if the cotton is picked quickly and harvested properly it is likely to look light and bright and its grade should be higher. It won't contain a great deal of leaf or foreign matter.

By the same reasoning, open cotton that is left in the field for a long time, exposed to all sorts of weather, becomes progressively darker and duller in color and inferior in grade.

The foliage becomes drier and more brittle making it more difficult to remove leaf and trash in ginning.

Cotton from bolls that open after frost may be Spotted, Tinged, or Yellow Stained. When such cotton is picked and ginned with cotton from other bolls that have opened normally before frost, Spotted cotton may result.

Insect Spots

Spots are also caused by insects. In localities of red soil, fallen or low hanging bolls may become dirt-stained.

All of which adds up to this: You may never get the chance to make some extra money by giving the answers to these questions before a TV audience. But every cotton season you have the opportunity of earning additional money by practicing what you know—by harvesting your cotton as promptly and carefully as possible.

MILK PRODUCTS MARKET UP DESPITE LOW BUTTER USE

Use of butter continues near a record low. But consumption has gained for other dairy items which contain milk solids-not-fat, creating a greater total market for milk products.

Per capita consumption of milk solids-not-fat in such forms as cheese, evaporated and condensed milk, frozen dairy products, dry whole milk, and nonfat dry milk has averaged 48 to 50 pounds in recent years. It was less than 40 pounds in the 1920's and 1930's.

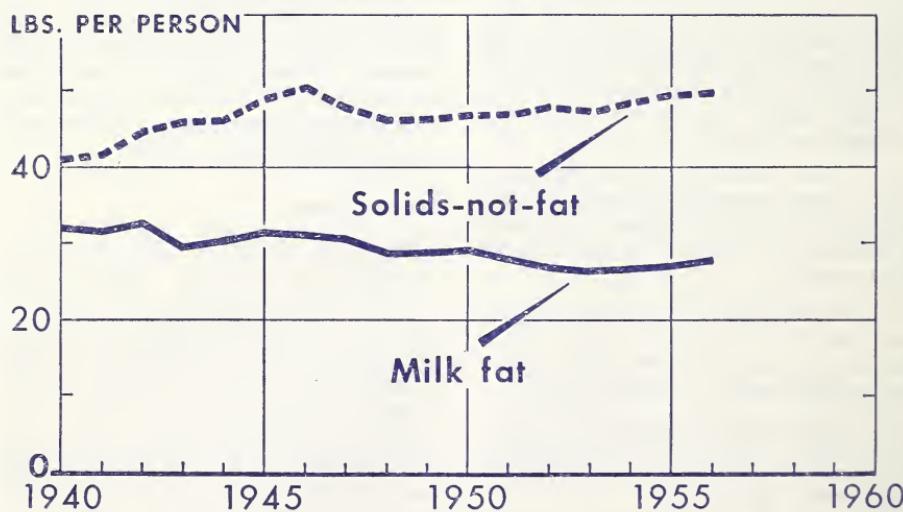
Despite this increase for all milk, a large part of farm production of solids-not-fat is still not used for food. About 30 percent was not marketed by farmers in 1955. In recent years a substantial portion of the supply has been processed into nonfat dry milk which is purchased by the Government to help support prices of manufacturing milk.

Use of milk fat declined as food processors and households shifted to lower cost substitutes. Before World War II per capita consumption of butter was 17 to 18 pounds. It dropped to less than 9 pounds by 1955. At the same time consumption increased for margarine and cheese spreads, and vegetable fats and oils for cooking purposes. Today relatively less milk fat is being used in several products including whole milk and cream.

An important reason for the decline in use of butter is the wide price difference between it and margarine. For many years butter retailed for twice the price of margarine. With the present price spread of about 2.5 to 1 expected to continue, it will be difficult to expand commercial butter sales.

Herbert C. Kriesel
Agricultural Economics Division, AMS

CONSUMPTION OF MILK FAT AND SOLIDS-NOT-FAT



Consumer income in the first quarter of 1957 was running at an annual rate of \$1,736 per person. Of this amount, on an average, \$427, or about one-fourth was being spent for food. Both per capita figures were up about 3 percent from the first quarter of 1956.

The proportion of income spent for food has ranged from 24 to 26 percent (approximately one-fourth of the total consumer income) each year since 1950. Expenditures for clothing and shoes have taken from 7.5 to 9 percent of income. About 2 percent has gone for tobacco. Consumer income in 1957 is expected to total somewhat higher than in 1956. Increased expenditures for food, clothing, and tobacco are in prospect.

Marketing Costs

Marketing charges for food rose in the first quarter of 1957. The figure was only a little higher than in the previous quarter but 4 percent higher than in the first quarter of 1956.

Costs of processing and distributing farm foods were generally up, mainly due to higher transportation rates and higher wages. Operating costs are likely to go up further during the remainder of 1957.

Cattle

Total slaughter the rest of 1957 probably will be below that of the corresponding months of 1956. Marketings of fed cattle will be large through the year but fewer grass cattle are likely to be sold for slaughter. Prices of most market classes are higher, with the average to farmers in May 1957, \$17.50 per cwt. This is up about \$2.50 from figures last winter and \$2.20 from April 1956.

The seasonal rise in prices of fed cattle this summer probably will be gradual. Prices should hold up well this fall at levels above the fall of 1956. Feeders and the lower grades are ex-

pected to decline seasonally in the coming months but will be helped by rising prices of fed cattle and smaller supplies of stockers.

Poultry

Output of broilers continues ahead of 1956 figures but prices this summer may be at or above those during the corresponding months of 1956. Marketings of young chickens from egg-laying flocks will be smaller. Smaller supplies of red meat also may help demand for broilers.

Chick hatchings for laying flock replacement are down about 20 percent, assuring fewer laying pullets and smaller output of eggs this fall. Egg prices are likely to rise above those of a year earlier by September.

Feed Grains

Record stocks remained on hand April 1, 1957. They were about 6 percent larger than in the spring of 1956. Domestic use in October 1956–March 1957 was about the same as a year earlier. Exports were a little smaller. At the start of the new season, on October 1, 1957, combined carryover probably will be up 6 million tons. Most of the increase is in corn stocks but oats are down one-third, and other major grains about the same.

Corn prices are substantially below those of a year earlier and will continue lower this summer. They have made little seasonal rise so far this year.

Hogs

Prices of hogs will reach a seasonal peak this summer. They are likely to continue above those of a year earlier and at the highest level in 3 years.

The seasonal decline this fall is likely to be greater than a year earlier, but prices are expected to stay above 1956 levels until near the end of this year.

AMERICA'S SWEET TOOTH AIDS FRUIT AND TREE NUT GROWERS

Ever wonder what America's national sweet tooth means to our growers of fruits and tree nuts?

At least part of the answer is found in our use of fruit-and-nut-flavored ice creams, sherbets, and other frozen desserts.

Wholesale manufacturers of these products alone purchased around 112 million pounds of fruits and berries and 27 million pounds of tree nuts and peanuts during 1953—latest year for which these figures are available. And this does not include fruits and nuts used as toppings.

AMS Survey

These facts come from the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, which recently published results of a survey on this subject.

In addition to those 112 million pounds of fruit purchased in 1953 for frozen desserts, earlier AMS surveys show that another 140 million pounds were taken that year by wholesale, multi-unit retail, and door-to-door distributing bakers. Still another 300 million pounds were purchased in 1953 to make into preserves, jellies, and jams.

All this makes it look as though America had not one but several sweet teeth—each one larger than the last.

To take a closer look at some of those AMS figures for frozen desserts:

Pecans and almonds used for frozen desserts in 1953 were about 6 percent of all 1953 domestic production of these nuts. For English walnuts the figure was about 3 percent. Again, these figures do not include the large quantities of nuts used as toppings or served with frozen desserts.

About 80 percent of these 112 million pounds of fruit were purchased in frozen form, compared with about 18 percent in canned or other nonfrozen

processed forms. Only 2 percent were obtained as fresh fruit.

Frozen fruit purchases by the frozen dessert industry are equivalent to 12 percent of the total 1953 commercial frozen fruit pack, excluding citrus juice concentrates.

The frozen dessert industry used in 1953 about 20 percent of the total 1953 frozen strawberry pack, almost one-third of the total frozen peach pack, and about one-fourth of the total pack of frozen red raspberries.

The frozen dessert industry is a growing market for fruits. Assuming probable population growth and continued income rises, total consumption of frozen desserts might be around 1,200 million gallons by 1975—a jump of about 60 percent above 1953 production levels.

Allowing for a continued increase in popularity of fruit-flavored frozen desserts, total purchases of fruits by this industry might rise around 70 percent during the same period. If this happened, it would mean the industry would have to purchase 190 million pounds of fruit (fresh weight equivalent) in 1975. In other words, this would mean an increase of 78 million pounds of fruit.

Robert B. Reese
Marketing Research Division, AMS

Farmers' Prices

(1910-14=100)

Date	Prices received by farmers	Parity index ¹	Parity ratio
May 1956-----	240	286	84
April 1957-----	242	296	82
May 1957-----	243	296	82

¹ Index of prices paid, interest, taxes, and wage rates.

TALLOW EXPORTS ARE INCREASING

Thanks to high quality and relatively low prices, foreign use of U. S. tallow is increasing.

In fact, exports of inedible tallow and greases have been trending upward since the end of World War II, and production and exports set new records in 1956.

Ending stocks increased, however, as the rise in total disappearance was not large enough to offset the increase in output.

Here are the figures:

In 1956, exports accounted for about 49 percent of the total disappearance of inedible tallow and greases. This compares with 45 percent in 1955 and 3 percent in 1947.

Production in 1956 reached 3,118 million pounds, compared with only 2,023 million pounds in 1947. Exports rose from 68 million pounds in 1947 to 1,488 million pounds in 1956.

With domestic consumption at 1,577 million pounds in 1956, this left 353 million pounds on hand at the end of 1956 compared with 299 million pounds in 1955, and 246 million pounds in 1947.

Domestic consumption declined in the postwar era through 1952 but has leveled off since then at slightly less than 1.6 billion pounds.

Soap Consumption

Consumption in soap continued downward since 1952 but has been offset by expanding use from fat splitting and animal feeds. Tallow and grease have just about replaced all other hard and soft oils used in soap, except coconut oil, low-priced foots, and other secondary products. However, this has not compensated for the inroads in the soap market made by synthetic detergents.

Consumption of inedible tallow and greases in fat splitting set a new record of 286 million pounds in 1956, up some-

what from the 278 million pounds of 1955. But use in animal feeds in 1956, as reported to the Bureau of Census, was 194 million pounds, up 72 million pounds from 1955.

There is some feeling in the trade that actual consumption in feeds is much higher than reported. This would, of course, mean that domestic consumption of inedible tallow and greases actually was larger in 1956 than the above figures would indicate.

As a group, inedible tallow and greases have the lowest price range of any U. S. fats and oils moving in the world market. These prices are not only relatively low, but have been relatively stable since 1953. They were 6.6 cents per pound in 1954, 7.2 cents in 1955, and 6.7 cents per pound in 1956. Increased output, expanded exports, and decreased demand from the domestic soap manufacturers seem to be the reasons.

George W. Kromer
Agricultural Economics Division, AMS

1956 Cotton Crop Down By 1.4 Million Bales

Ginnings for the season indicate a 1956 cotton crop of 13,310,000 bales of 500 pounds gross weight, according to the Crop Reporting Board. This compares with the 1955 crop of 14,721,000 bales, and the 10-year average of 13,098,000 bales.

Value of the 1956 crop totaled \$2,111 million based on the average price of 31.7 cents per pound for the season to May 1, 1957. Value of production was \$268 million less than in 1955. The average 1955 price was 32.33 cents per pound.

Cottonseed production is estimated at 5,423,000 tons, compared with 6,043,000 tons in 1955. The average price received by farmers during the 1956 season was \$53.50 per ton with production valued at \$290 million. This would be \$21 million higher than the 1955 crop for which average prices were \$44.60 a ton.

CROP REPORTS ATTRACT WORLDWIDE ATTENTION

The work of the Crop and Livestock Reporting Service is not only one of the oldest but one of the most valuable services which the United States Department of Agriculture renders to the farmers of this country.

Best proof of the way it is regarded is the fact that it is studied as a model by visitors from all over the world.

It started because farmers found out how hard it was to grow the right amounts of farm products to get a fair price unless they had available unbiased information, on a nationwide scale, about the kind and amount of each product needed.

Farmers Benefit

The service began in 1839, but 1957 farmers are still appreciating it.

Here's the way one South Dakota grower put it:

"The crop and livestock reports are very helpful to me as they take some of the uncertainty out of farming. I am sorry I farmed for years without them. I think I would be a little further ahead now if I had had them sooner"

A Kansas farmer volunteered that "I think a lot of the crop forecasts and summaries I get in return for volunteering the estimates in my neighborhood."

This farmer is now building a registered cow herd. Short on hay, he makes good use of the Service. "I'm watching the crop reports for an indication of the best time to buy," he says.

A third farmer uses the crop reports "to buy proteins for the 150-odd head of calves I feed every year.

"I generally buy my protein in June for October delivery," he explains. "I look at prospects for cotton and the bean crop and buy whatever looks best to me."

Here's the way the Crop and Livestock Reporting Service works:

The Agricultural Marketing Service provides information on agricultural production and prospective production in time to be useful in the current planning for and marketing of farm products. Crop and livestock reporting methods are designed to get information quickly from all parts of the Nation, covering hundreds of different products. These reports accurately reflect the direction of change and approximate magnitude of change (year to year and month to month) in acreage, yield, production, livestock numbers, and prices received or paid by farmers.

Estimates are adjusted every 5 years, after the Bureau of the Census in the Department of Commerce takes its full Census of Agriculture. This process of revision to the new Census base also stimulates the search for refinements in methods that will make the current yearly and monthly estimates more accurate.

In 1956, revision of estimates for 1949 through 1955, based on the 1954 Census of Agriculture were completed in one of the shortest times on record. Revised estimates of livestock and poultry numbers on farms were published in February 1956; revised estimates for field crops were published in July; and revised estimates for vegetables were published in December.

Better Methods

Some of the other special projects in 1956 were:

Research to find ways of improving crop and livestock estimating methods was expanded in June to include the North Central States; and research was continued in the Southern States where it has been in progress for 2 years.

A search is being made, too, for objective ways to forecast yields of cotton, corn, wheat, and soybeans that will improve the forecasts during each season. For cotton, methods have been devised that work reasonably well

even when the plants are quite young. But for corn, wheat, and soybeans the procedures now available seem to apply only when the grain on the plants is fairly well developed.

About 13,000 farm operators in some 375 counties throughout the 48 States were visited in early 1956 to obtain information on expenditures for production and family living. Such surveys help to determine what prices should be collected and how they should be weighted together each month for the Parity Index.

A bulletin summarizing United States prices received by farmers was published in June 1956. It includes monthly, season average, and annual average prices for most commodities for which monthly data are prepared.

The Soil Bank program greatly increased the need for providing assist-

ance and special estimates for use in the administration of various USDA programs. The Commodity Stabilization Service was furnished county estimates and other special data for use in day-to-day operation of the Soil Bank and the allotment and price support programs.

Emphasis was placed on more frequent reporting and broader coverage of reports on various crops such as cattle, hogs, turkeys, hatchery output, and honey. A special report, made in October 1955, provided an early indication of the 1956 turkey crop. The Milk Production Report was broadened to include supplemental releases on interstate movement of dairy cattle, milk cow numbers, and rations and roughage fed to milk cows.

R. K. Smith, *Deputy Director
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS*

TEENAGERS "DIG" THOSE COOL COTTON CLOTHES

The American Miss, age 14 to 17, prefers cotton for her readymade summer wardrobe. No other fiber remotely approaches its popularity for any of four specific summer items in a young teenager's wardrobe: Skirts, blouses, everyday dresses, and dressup dresses.

So interviewers working on a study for the Marketing Research Division were told repeatedly in talking to more than 1,700 girls from every section of the country.

Speaking of their summer clothes, 94 percent said they preferred cotton for skirts, and 92 percent favored it for everyday dresses. Eighty-four percent called it their first choice for blouses, and 51 percent for dressup dresses. Nylon, the choice of 21 percent for dressup summer dresses, was second in preference for that garment. But neither nylon nor any fiber except cotton polled as much as 10 percent for any of the other three items.

Popular as cotton is with the teenagers in choosing their summer wardrobes, it also gets a heavy vote for a

great many other items not restricted to summer use.

For example, 98 percent owned cotton shorts and 6 percent owned wool shorts. Among owners of slacks, 87 percent owned cotton slacks and 23 percent owned wool slacks. In discussing both items, a number of girls named more than 1 fiber.

Finally, 55 percent owned cotton sports jackets. Wool was second with 24 percent.

More than 9 out of 10 of the girls had something favorable to say about cotton—the best record made by any fabric. Fewer than 4 out of 10 had a criticism to make of cotton. Mainly the tendency of cotton to wrinkle was criticized.

The principal reason given for the overwhelming preference shown cotton is that cotton clothes are easy to wash and to iron. The girls were also enthusiastic about the durability of cotton clothes, their coolness and what the young ladies described as their "neat", their "crisp", their "pretty, good looking" appearance.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PLANTED AND HARVESTED ACRES?

You growers can't reap without sowing. Or can you? If you can, what's the difference between planted and harvested acres? Mathematical difference, of course.

Taking the first question first, some farmers have harvested annual crops they did not sow—even cotton!

In some areas of Arizona, sprouts grow from cotton stubble. They call it "stub cotton" and when stands are good, it makes extra high yields.

Volunteer Wheat

Then there is volunteer wheat. In some years, wheat farmers harvest a crop of wheat they don't plant. In areas where farmers are accustomed to seeding wheat year after year and often harvesting only disappointments, occasionally a combination of shattered grain and moisture at the right time results in a good stand and a harvest without sowing.

Could it be an attempt by nature to balance the scales? It may balance those scales in part, but it creates special problems for crop reporters in reporting for their farms and for statisticians in estimating wheat acreage.

Arizona farmers with stub cotton either report it as planted or note in their comments that, in addition to their reported planted acres, they have so many acres of stub cotton. The acreage is small and is treated as planted acreage.

As for that wheat harvested but not planted, reporters in such areas are asked to report the acreage of volunteer wheat harvested. A separate estimate of volunteer harvested acreage is made and is added to the planted and harvested acreage for wheat.

So much for the answers to that first question: Can a grower reap without sowing and, if so, what does a crop reporter do about it?

Don't you have the answer yet to that second question: "What is the difference between planted and harvested acres"? Let's go into it a little further.

Obviously the question can't be answered without defining what is meant by planting and harvesting. It follows axiomatically that if the planted acreage and the harvested acreage are reported correctly, the difference between the two must be correct.

Before setting up definitions, let's explain why this difference is of major importance in making planted acreage estimates of cotton, corn, wheat, oats, and most other crops. It's also of major importance in estimating harvested acreage for some crops.

In the first place, current acreage estimates are based largely on sample data, that is, reports submitted by you and other crop reporters. These samples are expanded to area and State estimates, using the U. S. Bureau of the Census *harvested* acreage as benchmarks.

Essentially the difference between planted and harvested acreage, as determined from crop reports, is added to the Census harvested acreage base.

Many Uses

For a few crops, primarily sorghums and annual legumes, Census data are for acreage "planted for all purposes." For these crops, crop reporters' estimates are used to carry forward Census planted acreages. The difference between planted and harvested acres, as obtained from crop reporters, is also used to estimate acres harvested for grain and acres used for other purposes.

Since planted acreage estimates are used in connection with allotments, for the Soil Bank, for establishing yields for penalty payments in case of excess harvested acreage, and for uses, the

difference between planted and harvested becomes of major importance.

Now, for a few basic definitions as a guide:

Let's take that familiar one, that appears on so many inquiries: "Planted for all purposes." First, we have to be sure we have a common understanding. Oats "planted for all purposes" is largely self-explanatory. It includes oats planted for grain, hay, pasture, and plowing under.

This term also includes any acreage that did not germinate and any that just dried up and blew away. For all intents and purposes, all this would also be true of sorghum.

In case of replanting does that double the planted acreage? No, a 50-acre field replanted one or several times is still only 50 acres planted.

Now, let's get to the definition of harvesting. A limited number of crops, like cotton and tobacco, are grown for a specific purpose and can be harvested for only one use. In contrast, sorghums, soybean, and grain crops may be harvested for grain, forage, or hay, or they may be grazed. Grazing is one means of harvesting grain acreage, but not cotton acreage.

But maybe it's not as simple as it looks. Should a drought-scorched field of grain or sorghum which has been grazed for a few days be counted as harvested or as abandoned? In cases of this kind, statisticians rely upon the crop reporter's judgment.

Farmers' reports on the acreage harvested for grain and the total planted acreage of the crop for their farms give the essential information for tie-ins with Census harvested acreage. So they make possible planted acreage estimates.

What is the difference between planted and harvested acreage if both are reported correctly? Well, the difference generally includes acreage abandoned or not harvested for any cause—drought, flood, disease, insects, or labor shortage. It also includes one item that is easy to overlook, acres removed or destroyed for compliance with allotments or Soil Bank Reserve agreements.

However, on some inquiries we ask for acreage planted and acreage harvested for grain. Here the difference may include some acreage harvested in other ways; for example, cut for hay or grazed. This makes it important for crop reporters to read the column headings and questions carefully.

So in filling out questionnaires where acreages and production and utilization information are asked, be sure to check your estimates of acres planted and acres harvested.

Now about the second question: What's the difference between planted and harvested acres? You get an "A" if your answer is "Acres not harvested."

John J. Morgan
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS

Turpentine Output Less in 1956-57

Turpentine production during 1956-57 totaled 644,930 barrels, about 2 percent less than in 1955-56. Average for the 1951-55 crop years is 612,000 barrels.

Production of gum rosin for 1956-57, at 444,590 drums, was nearly 2 percent less than for the previous crop year, partly because of unfavorable weather.

Steam distilled rosin production was reported at 1,324,220 drums, compared with 1,369,440 drums in 1955-56.

Gum turpentine stocks at all points on March 31, 1957, were down to 45,130 barrels, compared with 72,170 barrels on March 31, 1956. The decrease in CCC stocks accounted for practically all of the drop.

Wood turpentine stocks on March 31, 1957, were about 10 percent higher than on March 31, 1956.

Gum rosin stocks of 566,250 drums at the end of the 1956-57 crop year were 38,260 drums less than at the beginning of the season. CCC stocks were down about 26,000 drums.

The 1956-57 exports of turpentine were 125,150 barrels and of rosin, 604,010 drums compared to 101,980 barrels and 551,700 drums for 1955-56.

FRUIT, VEGETABLE GROWERS— STALE NEWS IS BAD NEWS

You growers of fruits, tree nuts, and vegetables—most of them perishable or at least semiperishable—know that timely information can often mean the difference between making money or losing it.

The Crop Reporting Board puts this factor of freshness—timeliness—high on its list of “musts” when it prepares a report on current and near-future supplies for your use. However, fullness of coverage in these reports is also vital; the necessity for accuracy goes without saying.

Let's take a look at how well each of these points is handled:

First, coverage. This has now extended to about 60 kinds of fruits, vegetables, and tree nuts. The estimates for the 28 principal vegetables now reported individually comprise about 92 percent of the commercial production of all vegetables.

Moreover, that word “commercial” covers vegetables produced primarily for sale. It includes local market production as well as production in the more distant shipping areas.

In addition, annual estimates were inaugurated in 1953 for the aggregate production of minor vegetables and the production of each of the principal vegetables in the minor producing States, constituting the remaining 8 percent of commercial supplies.

Our fruit estimates cover at least 95 percent of the national production.

The second point is frequency. We now have monthly reports for each major fruit and vegetable crop throughout the crop season. Vegetable, potato, and sweetpotato reports start with planted acreage and end with harvested acreage, production and value of production.

It wasn't so long ago that monthly stocks reports for potatoes were not even thought of. Now we have reports during the potato marketing season on December 1, January 1, February 1, and March 1.

Fruit and vegetable growers said that monthly reports are not frequent enough during the critical growing season. It's certainly true that freezes, floods, storms can change radically the production prospects of a crop overnight.

To meet this demand, we have to a certain extent supplemented the monthly production forecasts with “flash reports” issued within a few days after a crop catastrophe.

In recent years the need has been stressed for weekly reports of acreage planted, in order to measure potential rate of harvest and short-period supplies for market. These are in the nature of “running inventories.”

Third, fast coverage. With present facilities, information on prospective production can be collected, compiled, and released in Washington within about 10 days. News media of every kind then make this information immediately available to you growers. Finally, growers and crop reporters get detailed reports through the mail.

Fourth, accuracy. These reports give growers the best available information on any given date. If something unforeseeable—a drought, a hurricane—occurs, then growers can use this information to help them make their adjustments quickly and correctly. Remember that a report that is only 5 percent off, is 95 percent accurate.

We aim at serviceable accuracy—the utmost accuracy attainable without sacrificing timeliness, good coverage, and speed in release.

Consequently, it would be a mistake to evaluate accuracy independently from the other elements that make the reports valuable.

Undue emphasis on any one of these four elements is like tinkering with just one cylinder of a four-cylinder motor. The important thing is to make sure all four cylinders are operating well.

Reginald Royston
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS

"Bert" Newell's Letter

This letter hasn't a thing to do with crop and livestock estimates. Actually, I don't know just what it does have to do with.

The other evening when I got home I was sort of wound up and in order to get my mind on something different I happened to pick up my copy of Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations."

I sure wish I was smart like some of those people and could originate some real deep and important thoughts. I'll bet a lot of those real catchy remarks didn't originate just because someone sat down and said "Now I'm going to think up something real smart to say."

Take that remark by Vice President Tom Marshall "What this country needs is a good 5-cent cigar." I'll bet it just popped out before he knew it. Since he was an important man, it caught on and actually became a sort of philosophy for the times.

It sounds to me like "that's that" got started because someone of importance got stuck and couldn't think what "that" was so he just added another "that."

Then there are some things we consider as classics now but the person who said or wrote them probably had no idea at the time that they were very profound. After Abraham Lincoln delivered his "Gettysburg Address" a lot of people thought it was pretty flat and most reporters seemed to think it was a pretty silly performance for a president of the United States. Yet nowadays every school boy and girl knows: "Four-score and seven years ago" and all the rest of those immortal lines.

There is one quote I always liked. Voltaire is credited with saying: "I disapprove of what you say, but will defend to the death your right to say it."

I got to looking into this and I found that that exact expression is not recorded in Voltaire's works. He said something very close to it, though, and some other writers paraphrased it.

Anyway, Voltaire was quite a man and spent most of his life campaigning for the freedom of the individual. His road was pretty rough at times and he spent several terms in jail.

Anyway, I like that quotation because it sort of boils down the idea of a free democracy into a very few words. How could you possibly have a free country if you did not have a right to express your honest thoughts without fear that your head would roll if you had a little different idea than somebody else?

I don't enjoy a lot of dissension, bickering, and squabbling, but in a good argument or discussion somebody usually learns something he didn't know before. Then, too, I get letters from a lot of people and they usually say what they think. Of course, when they agree with my side I sort of secretly think they are pretty smart folks.

But you know something, nobody learns very much from a fellow who always agrees with everything you say. I get quite a lot out of all kinds of letters and discussions that come up around here and at home too. It would be a pretty drab existence if there weren't some disagreements now and then.

Well, I guess all this amounts to is a little rambling visit with you on some of my funny ideas. Anyway, as we listen, and we must listen if we are to learn anything, to the pros and cons of issues, we are all glad that we live in a country where people can express their views.

And it is important, particularly in our kind of Government, that we get all the facts whether it is on how much to plant, when to sell, or the current political issue. The individual, sooner or later, has to make up his own mind.



S. R. Newell

Chairman, Crop Reporting Board, AMS

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